NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION

INFORMATION LETTER

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GRADE LABELING OF LITTLE VALUE TO CONSUMER

Facts Developed by Independent Survey of System Now Used in Canada

The National Recovery Administration and the Department of Agriculture, in their crusade to force the adoption of grade labeling upon the American canning industry, have held up the Canadian grading system as a model that should be adopted in this country for the protection of the consumer. Mr. Armin W. Riley, NRA Division Administrator in charge of the canning code, recently said: "An example of what has been done in the field lies before us in the experience of the Dominion of Canada, which for 16 years has successfully demonstrated the practicability of a Federal Government grading law." The Consumers Advisory Board recommended to the canning industry that it make an intensive study of the Canadian situation.

Such a study, just completed by General Marketing Counselors, Inc., an impartial economic consulting organization with headquarters in New York City, does not support Division Administrator Riley's belief that the Canadian system is highly successful.

"Even though Canadian canners have been required for the last 16 years to show Government grades on canned foods," said Mr. Jean F. Carroll, president of General Marketing Counselors, "the system has not resulted in making Canadian women familiar with the different grades of canned fruits and vegetables. We are sure that this is the true situation, for we went into all classes of homes and spent enough time interviewing each woman to be sure we knew how much knowledge she had regarding grades. The whole purpose of our organization is to get accurate facts regarding any situation which we study.

"The survey which we have just completed in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba," Mr. Carroll continued, "shows that only one woman out of every four has been made conscious of the fact that there are grades on the labels of the Canadian canned foods that she buys, and this is the situation in spite of an educational campaign that the Canadian Govern-

ment has been conducting to teach women to know grades and to make their purchases by grades. Our survey revealed the further fact that not all the women who know grades actually use them as a real buying guide, for only one woman out of eight placed more emphasis on the grade than on brand and price.

"The NRA Consumers Advisory Board has made so many favorable comments about the Canadian grading system that we were surprised to find that only 24 per cent of the women knew that there were grades on canned foods labels. We sent our own staff members into Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Quebec, and Montreal, and had them train local Canadian investigators, so that no one could question the validity of the survey that we were making. We even tested out our survey methods in Toronto before starting the final survey, in order to be sure that we were going to get an accurate report of the conditions existing up there. It's a good thing we didn't depend either on the people here who think that the grade-labeling system gives nearly perfect results in Canada, or on the people who condemn grade labeling, for neither side actually knew the facts. I believe this study is the first authentic study made in Canada to determine how much women know about the grading system and how much grades affect their buying."

As part of the study made by General Marketing Counselors, canned foods were purchased from Canadian distributors and were graded by experienced Canadian commercial buyers. A wide variation was found between the grades officially shown on the labels and the grades given to the same cans when the labels were removed, so that the commercial buyers would not know what official grades had been on the cans. These gradings by Canadian commercial buyers showed that, as permitted by the Canadian officials, some cans were higher in grade than designated on the label. But they also showed that some cans were below the grade carried on the label, thus revealing a lack of uniformity in grading which has forced Canadian distributors to do their own cutting and grading when making purchases.

A check on the prices charged in retail stores for the various grades showed a wide spread in prices for each grade. A number of officials in Washington have had the feeling that under a Government grade-labeling system most canned foods of the same product and grade would sell for about the same price, but the survey did not substantiate this belief. For example, "choice" tomatoes in No. 2½ cans sold at 7½ cents to 15 cents in chain stores and at 8½ cents to 13½ cents in independent stores. The survey also revealed instances where "fancy qual-

ity" products (the highest grade) were sold for the same price as "choice quality" products (the next highest grade). For quite a while the Canadian officials tried to get grocers to charge entirely different prices for the different grades, but they finally gave up the efforts as being useless.

For these reasons, and others, the Canadian law has not stabilized conditions within the canning industry as has been claimed.

GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE ON A B C GRADES PROTESTED

The Department of Agriculture last week issued, for release on November 28, an article prepared by the Bureau of Home Economics entitled "New Labels on Canned Foods," and later issued a correction following protests that originated with wholesale and retail trade associations. In the opening paragraph the original release stated:

> From now on when you visit the stores of one large chain of groceries in this country you will find canned foods which are labeled to show the quality of the goods you get for the price you pay. That is, you will find cans labeled, for instance, "Grade A, Fancy Quality Golden Bantam Corn" and "Grade A (Fancy) Red Ripe Tomatoes," and so on through the list of canned vegetables and fruits. There will be other cans labeled "Grade B (Extra Standard)," "Grade C (Standard)," and you will find these cans listed at different prices according to their grade.

The first paragraph, as revised by the Department, stated:

> In the near future when you visit one group of grocery stores you will find some canned foods which are labeled to show the quality of the goods you get for the price you pay. That is, you will find cans labeled, for example, "Grade A, Fancy Quality Golden Bantam Corn," and "Grade A (Fancy) Red Ripe Tomatoes." There will be other cans labeled "Grade B (Extra Standard)," and "Grade C (Standard)."

As will be noted, the revised release corrects the time at which the new labels may be found, omits reference to "one large chain," limits the statement about the new labels to "some" canned foods, and omits the statement with reference to finding these canned foods listed at different prices according to their grades.

The remainder of the article was devoted largely to statements regarding the lack of information on canned food labels and an exposition of the meaning of the A B C grades formulated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. In its original form the article said, in one of its concluding paragraphs: "Now one big firm steps out, not waiting for the rest, and cooperates with the government by using the recommended labels and standards established by the Department of Agriculture for voluntary adoption." This was amended to say that the one big

firm steps out and "uses the labels and standards" established, etc.

The advice of the Bureau of Home Economics is summed up in one paragraph, which in its original form read:

> This is the time then, says the Bureau of Home Economics, for the housekeeper, at every purchase she makes, to ask for the can with the grade label and ask for it in every store she deals with.

In the corrected release this paragraph was amended to read:

> This is the time when, says the Bureau of Home Economics, for the housekeeper, at every purchase she makes, to ask whether the product carries a grade designation, ask it in every store she deals with.

The National American Wholesale Grocers Association laid its protest before the President in a letter which pointed out that this release sponsored by a government bureau plainly urges housewives to patronize one large grocery chain which has agreed to use the A B C grades, that the Bureau of Home Economics, before an official finding has been made on the labeling question, attempts to decide the question, and that it is not fair for a government bureau to urge housewives to trade at one particular grocery chain to the disadvantage of thousands of independent merchants.

The National Association of Retail Grocers and its affiliated associations protested against the release on the ground that, while it does not advise housekeepers not to buy elsewhere than at one big chain, the inference is plain that purchases should be made there as only that one firm is stated to have grade-labeled goods.

A protest was also made to the Bureau of Home Economics by a representative of the U. S. Wholesale Grocers Association, who pointed out the impropriety of sending out such an article while the labeling question is still under consideration.

The *Food Field Reporter* in its issue for December 3, stated that something of a furore had been created in the food world by the fact that the release "plugs" the A B C graded canned foods about to be sold in the stores of one company.

PENNSYLVANIA GROCERS ENDORSE DECRIPTIVE LABELING

The Pennsylvania Grocers Association, at a meeting on December 5, went on record as being opposed to the proposed A B C grade method of labeling canned foods, on the ground that it would be exceedingly detrimental to the interests of the individual retail grocer and the consumer. In the discussion of the question it was the consensus of opinion in the Associa-

tion, which has a membership of 9,000 retail grocers, that quality can not be coded and that the consumer can only be protected by the use of regular, honest descriptive labeling.

THE CASE AGAINST GRADE LABELING

A forceful statement of the case against grade labeling was made by G. B. Hotchkiss, Professor of Marketing in New York University, at the recent meeting of the Association of National Advertisers in Atlantic City. The chief points of the address, as summarized in "Advertising and Selling" for November 22, follow:

Great progress has been made since 1855 in protecting the consumer from unwholesome foods and drugs, and insuring him better value in other articles. This progress is due partly to regulatory laws and other forms of Government supervision, but a far more influential factor has been the adoption of packaged products bearing a trade-mark. In some commodity fields, certain trade-marks have become almost universally recognized as promising satisfactory service to the consumer, and have therefore been accepted as safe guides in purchasing.

This does not mean that buying by brand—or even by nationally known brands—invariably gives us our money's worth. A brand confers no merits upon a product; its value lies in what it signifies. But it is just as easy for us to avoid a brand that has been found unsatisfactory as to choose one that our past experience has approved. In buying by brands we rely upon the highest possible authority for the integrity of an article—the authority of its maker or sponsor.

Nevertheless, trade-marks and national advertising have borne the brunt of the attacks by radical theorists who advocate Government regulation of quality. It is to protect the public against the siren songs of advertisers that they would require all consumption goods to bear a grade-mark or "simple and meaningful grade name" that indicates conformity with certain quality standards. More conservative advocates, especially those who have had practical experience in developing quality standards, do not believe that such grade-marks could entirely supplant trade-marks showing origin, or entirely obviate the necessity of advertising.

Some of them, in fact, have seemed anxious to conciliate advertising men and advertising media by assurances that the adoption of quality standards will not decrease the volume of advertising. I cannot accept their conclusions. Speaking merely as one who has made some study of marketing methods of the past and present, I believe there is no possible compromise between officially regulated grades and privately advertised brands. Of course, grade-marks cannot supplant trade-marks altogether. Even in medieval times the mark of origin or sponsorship was needed, in order to trace the source of "false and adulterated" commodities. But the grade-mark will have to supplant the trade-mark as a guide for buyers, if it is to justify its existence and cost.

No one seems to have published any estimate of the cost of adequately supervising grades on the wholesale scale advocated by consumer advisory boards. In the field of foods alone it would obviously be far greater than the cost of maintaining minimum standards under the present Food and Drugs Act. In many commodity fields it would certainly exceed the amount now spent in national advertising of brands. Nevertheless, the inference is

plain that the cost is to be saved through reductions in the hypothetical wastes of advertising.

Moreover, the advertiser will have a new and powerful rival. His publicity in behalf of his brands will need to contend against the propaganda urging people to buy by grade—propaganda backed by an unlimited purse and conducted by cheaper methods than are available to him. The advertising dollar has depreciated considerably in recent years, and this new force might shrink it almost to the vanishing point. Perhaps some manufacturers might even think it indiscreet to advertise "look for the trademark," when a flood of official propaganda is urging people to "look for the grade-mark."

But there is a more vital reason why governmental regulation of grade standards would decrease the amount of advertising. Official regulation of price and quality is incompatible with advertising. They represent opposite philosophies. Regulation is always paternalistic, authoritarian, aristocratic. Advertising is the essence of democracy. It recognizes that power lies with the people; they cannot be forced, but merely persuaded. That this process of persuasion involves appeals to the passions and emotions, exaggeration, and deceitful promises is lamentable. The evil seems to be inherent in a democracy.

Advertising invites the common people to make their own choices instead of accepting the wiser choices their "betters" could make for them. And its invitations are keyed to the mentality of the common people.

Most people spend some of their money foolishly. They buy flimsy and tawdry merchandise; sometimes ignorantly, sometimes wilfully. Any person of superior intelligence could prescribe for them more wisely, even without the help of laboratory tests. But manufacturers are compelled to make the kind of articles people want, and tell people about them in the kind of messages people will receive. Advertisers are at the mercy of the consuming public, rather than the contrary, as the disciples of Veblen believe.

But this is only the first of the many fallacies of the regulators. The second great fallacy is the theory that all articles manufactured for consumption can be rated on the basis of general excellence in three, five, or any other number of grades. Even raw material can seldom be graded so narrowly.

The term "quality" is a snare and a delusion. No such thing exists. Persons and things have specific qualities like size, strength, age, durability, texture, color. They can be rated according to the degree in which they possess any one of these specific qualities. They can be given a composite rating on the basis of their many qualities. But the composite rating will depend on the weights assigned to each quality. And the value of the rating to any consumer depends on whether its weighting of specific qualities coincides with her own.

Here comes the third great fallacy: the fallacy that consumers have standardized wants. In Boston some 20 years ago a group of women sought a standardized silk petticoat. One hundred petticoats were made up according to specifications. Specified silk fabric, specified stitching, specified sizes, specified folding and packaging. They were distributed to 100 women with instructions to report their experiences. One petticoat came back in three days—cracked. One was going strong at the end of two years. The petticoats were standardized; the wearers were not.

Here is the fourth fallacy: the fallacy that consumers' wants are static. Most consumers (including those who have been loudest in demanding

quality standards) will probably be disappointed with the standards in some fields. They will certainly become discontented with them, when their wants change. Suppose, for example, silk hosiery were standardized with a minimum length of 30 inches, but the whims of fashion favor hosiery ending below the knee.

The fifth and greatest fallacy of all is that consumers will meekly submit to a regimentation of their living and buying habits. No hint of consumer regimentation has appeared in the propaganda for quality standards. On the contrary, quality standards have been put forth as a demand of consumers, to be wrested from the selfish and reluctant hands of manufacturers and merchants.

With certain kinds of articles, the individual does not object seriously to restriction. The prescriptions of authority regarding tools and utilities are more readily accepted than those regarding comforts and luxuries. The stenographers and clerks in an office seldom resent standardized pencils, paper and ink; they sometimes do resent standardized dress, and they would regard a standardized perfume or lipstick as an invasion of their rights, no matter what savings might be made by using it.

ARTICLE IN "NEW OUTLOOK" VIGOROUSLY OPPOSES GRADE LABELING

Under the title "Winning a Government A," the *New Outlook* has published in its December issue an article by E. Eric Jamesen on what he characterizes as "standards by government edict." The article deals with the general subject of standardization of consumers' goods, but because the canning industry has been among the first confronted with this problem and because there has been so much public discussion of its work and negotiations on the subject, most of the article deals with the proposal for grade-labeling of canned foods.

The article is a vigorous statement in opposition to the grade-label program, and will be of interest to all canners. The December *New Outlook* went on sale at the newsstands on December 4.

FOOD AND GROCERY CHAIN STORES MAKE GRADE LABELING RECOMMENDATION

The National Recovery Administration announced on December 3 the receipt of a report from the Executive Committee of the Food and Grocery Chain Stores of America, Inc., recommending that provisions for quality grade labeling, with modifying descriptions, be incorporated in the canning industry code. The report also recommends that the wholesale and retail food and grocery trade codes be amended to forbid distribution of any goods not labeled as to grade. The NRA announcement further stated:

> In recommending the use of the grade system of labeling the committee rejected the so-called "descriptive" type of labeling which had been urged by a committee of canners.

Administration officials regarded the action of the chain stores as particularly significant and a long step forward in safeguarding the consumer. The association includes practically all of the grocery chain store organizations of the country except the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., which is now designing grade labels for its new pack. The group represented by the association controls more than 22,000 retail food outlets.

In addition to their function as distributors of a very important portion of national brands of canned foods, the chain stores have private brands which they have packed to their specifications and for which they design labels.

Briefly summarized, the committee's recommendations are as follows:

(1) Adoption of the standards for grades officially promulgated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture for tomatoes, cream style corn, whole-grain corn, peas, snap beans and grapefruit. (The five vegetable items named represent approximately half the pack of all canned vegetables.)

(2) The four grades of each of these products should be designated by the terms "Fancy," "Choice," "Standard," and "Substandard."

(3) One of these terms designating the grade should appear prominently on every label, together with a "key" to these grading terms which will make clear to the consumer the relative quality of each of these four grades.

(4) In addition, the size of the peas and snap beans should be stated on the label, and in the case of grapefruit the legend "Packed Without Added Sugar" should appear on the label where applicable.

(5) The President should appoint a permanent committee to continuously consider the whole problem of standards and labels. This committee would be responsible for recommending that additional products be added to the six named, as satisfactory standards for such products may be developed.

Further and more detailed restrictive rules are also proposed, such as forbidding the use of the words "fancy," "choice," etc., on a label except as referring to the recognized grade of the contents of the can.

The members of the committee are: Chairman, Warren H. Clarke, Kroger Grocery & Baking Co.; Arthur O'Keeffe, First National Stores, Inc.; William Park, American Stores Co.; W. L. Harrison, Safeway Stores, Inc.; R. H. Marshall, David Pender Grocery Co. and Southern Grocery Stores, Inc.; Charles G. Eden, H. C. Bohack, Inc.; and Mr. Massmann, ex officio. This committee personally represents 16,000 stores doing an annual business in foods in excess of $700,000,000.

FOOD LEGISLATION PROSPECTS

Under a section entitled "The Fight for New Food and Drug Legislation," the annual report of the Food and Drug Administration summarizes the prospects for legislation during the coming session of Congress as follows:

"The fight for effective food and drug legislation is not ended. The months of effort already expended have not been wasted. Constructive suggestions have been developed in the course of the hearings which will undoubtedly improve the chances for the enactment of legislation at the next session of the Congress. Most important, however, is the aroused public

interest in the purity of the food and drug supply, a concern which has long been dormant. This interest, once aroused, will unmistakably grow into a united demand for effective legislation which cannot be gainsaid."

NOMINATIONS MADE FOR CODE AUTHORITY

At a three-day meeting of the Code Authority for the Canning Industry, December 4 to 6, nomination of candidates for the Code Authority was completed, and, as soon as the nominations for members and alternates are approved by the NRA, ballots will be sent to all members of the industry entitled to vote. The new Code Authority to be elected will take office February 1, 1935, for a period of one year.

RULE GOVERNING INTER-INDUSTRY SALES UNDER CANNED SALMON CODE APPROVED

The National Industrial Recovery Board, on recommendation of Division Administrator Armin W. Riley, has approved the following new rule govering inter-industry sales:

"Sales of canned salmon by one member of the industry to another member of the industry shall constitute a separate buyer classification. No member of the industry shall sell canned salmon to another member of the industry except in accordance with a posted price showing his open price for such class of sales; which price shall include all terms and conditions."

STATUS OF "SOAKED PEA" LABELING QUESTION

Legal and administrative consideration is being given to the steps to be taken by the Department of Agriculture in the case involving "soaked peas" under the McNary-Mapes amendment, according to the annual report of the Food and Drug Administration. It will be recalled that last March the Circuit Court of Appeals sustained the U. S. District Court in Indiana, which granted an injunction restraining the government from applying the terms of the amendment to "soaked dry peas." The question at issue is whether the decision of the appellate court should be accepted and the product known as "soaked peas" excluded from the substantial labeling requirements of the McNary-Mapes amendment.

SEIZURES UNDER McNARY-MAPES AMENDMENT

During the year ended June 30 seizure was recommended on 71 shipments of canned foods, under the provisions of the McNary-Mapes Amendment to the Food and Drugs Act, according to the annual report of the Food and Drug Administration. These were the products of 38 firms, totaling approximately 24,500

cases, including tomatoes, cherries, peas, pears, peaches and apricots, which failed to meet the requirements of the amendment. Of these, 15 actions, totaling 12,700 cases, were directed against canned tomatoes, most of the violations being excess peel or poor color. Thirty-three actions, totaling 6,200 cases, covered cherries, most of the violations being excessive pits. Nineteen actions, totaling 4,700 cases, concerned mostly over-mature peas. The other four actions, totaling 900 cases, concerned other fruits and were principally because of excessive trimming.

CANNING INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN RUSSIA

The development of the food industries in Russia is the subject of an extensive article in the November number of the "Economic Review of the Soviet Union," published by the Amtorg Trading Corporation in New York City.

Capital investments in the food industries from 1928 to 1933 totaled 3,000,000,000 rubles, as against half a billion rubles for the preceding five-year period (1924-1928), according to this article. The greater share of these investments went into the construction of new, large plants, built and equipped in accordance with modern standards, American technique being followed to a great extent. The number of new factories opened in the past five years has totaled more than 700. Much of the machinery and equipment installed in the new plants is imported.

According to Soviet statistics the production of canned foods in Russia in recent years has been as follows:

Year	No. of cans
1928-29	104,700,000
1930	229,200,000
1931	313,400,000
1932	716,000,000
1933	750,000,000

With reference to the canning industry the Review states:

At the beginning of the first Five-Year Plan period there were only 22 factories with an aggregate capacity of 100,000,000 cans a year; by the end of 1932 there were 48 plants with a capacity of 1,000,000,000 cans a year. Several of the new plants are among the largest in the world, having an annual capacity of from 90 to 100 million cans each. In the newly built plants all labor processes are mechanized and production is organized on the conveyor system. Canned milk was not produced at all prior to 1932. Now several canned milk factories, modeled after the latest American technique, have been erected. Among other new canned products are corn, whole tomatoes, and pork and beans.

As regards the fishing industry, the Review states:

As a consequence of the recent construction of refrigerating plants and canneries the population is now being provided with both fresh and canned fish in addition to dry or salted fish, which in pre-war days constituted the main part of the supply. The fish resources of the Soviet Union

are among the most important in the world. Russia's fisheries enjoyed a position of considerable importance even in pre-war times, when primitive methods were employed. By 1930 output already exceeded that of pre-war by 30 per cent and had attained the level set for the last year of the Five-Year Plan. The U. S. S. R. now ranks second among the countries of the world as regards fish catch. During the first Five-Year Plan period capital investments for the fishing industry totaled over 350,000,000 rubles, chiefly for refrigerating plants and canning factories. Much of the equipment has been purchased abroad, partly in the United States. The main center of the fishing industry is the Volga-Caspian region, which provides about half the annual catch, but the Arctic-White Sea and the Far Eastern fisheries are gaining in importance with the increasing emphasis on deep-sea fishing. The proportion of the total catch contributed by this type of fishing rose from 17 per cent in 1913 to 34.5 per cent in 1933.

In the four years from 1929 to 1933 the number of motor vessels in the fishing industry increased from 56 to 4,500 (including 96 trawlers, 66 seiners, 97 whalers and sealers, and 10 crab vessels). However, the process of mechanization is only beginning, as is indicated by the fact that the total fleet comprises 110,000 boats. The industry also had in 1933, 50 canneries with a capacity of nearly 300,000,000 cans, 12 refrigeration plants with a capacity of 800 tons, nine ice factories, 27 by-products plants, eight ship-building yards and 26 cooperage mills. The number of people employed in the fisheries amounted to 250,000 and in the other enterprises to 136,000. Over 80 per cent of the fishermen are organized into collectives.

The second Five-Year Plan provides for the construction of many new plants in various branches of the food industry, and the anticipated expansion for the canning industry is indicated by the estimate that the output in 1937 is planned to be 2,000,000,000 cans, as compared with an actual output in 1932 of 716,000,000.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET COMPETITION

Carlot shipments as reported by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture

Commodity	Week ending Nov. 24	Week ending Dec. 1		Total for season through Dec. 1	
		1934	1933	1934	1933
Beans, snap and lima	345	331	353	14,983	12,345
Tomatoes	180	167	140	25,007	22,836
Green peas	97	80	150	6,784	8,854
All other vegetables					
Domestic:					
Competing directly	3,185	4,201	3,206	186,531	165,703
Competing indirectly	33	27	29	722	643
Imports:					
Competing directly	9	32	10	43	13
Competing indirectly	37	21	50	366	521
Fruits:					
Citrus, domestic	3,465	3,705	2,625	18,967	14,711
Citrus, imports	7	2	6	269	359
Others, domestic	361	408	375	51,013	47,415
Index of fresh vegetable prices	70	72	83	.....	.....
Index of canned vegetable prices	91	91	72	.....	.....

PROGRESS OF SHRIMP PACK

	1934		1933	
	Nov. 22-Nov. 28	Aug. 2-Nov. 28	Nov. 23-Nov. 29	Aug. 3-Nov. 29
	Cases	*Cases*	*Cases*	*Cases*
East Coast	900	68,973	6,536	109,246
Alabama and Louisiana	2,525	491,533	4,140	356,487
Mississippi	7,800	110,047	2,464	89,145
Texas	2,500	58,629	2,000	44,400
Total	13,725	729,182	15,140	599,278

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO CANNERS

The Agricultural Experiment Station at Michigan State College has issued as Special Bulletin No. 249 a 68-page illustrated pamphlet on cabbage varieties. Sections of the bulletin are devoted to the history of cabbage as a garden vegetable, breeding studies, and the origin and development of cabbage varieties and their classification. Definite descriptions are given of a large number of varieties, and there is also an extended bibliography as well as a variety index.

An illustrated bulletin on the pepper weevil has been issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture as Technical Bulletin No. 447. Besides discussion of the economic importance of the weevil, its description, life cycle, etc., there are recommendations for control measures.

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